

ON THE EXISTENCE
OF A
SUPREME BEING.

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
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Inaugural dissertation on the Existence of a Supreme Being.

Man, when first he makes use of that faculty of reason which distinguishes him from other members of the animal creation, naturally seeks a cause for all the changes in the material world which take place around him. The necessity of the inference from a given event to its cause is so firmly implanted in our breasts, that our first idea on contemplating any object or relation of objects is: — Why is this? As we advance further and begin to reason from one thing to another, we are led on step by step to the contemplation of the highest perfection in whatever may be under our consideration. From the experience of a beautiful object we soar to the conception of what might be still more beautiful according to some mysterious standard of perfection which we find within us; and from our idea of human truth we picture to ourselves the notion of absolute truth. In like manner we form a conception from every object presented to us of the perfection of the attributes contained in it. These conceptions we term Ideas and if we grant them existence i. e. personify them we have then the conception of an Ideal.

But now the question arises: Where is the finality of these conceptions situated? Does there exist an infinity of answers to this enquiry, or is there to be found a single comprehensive reply? From the harmony and perfect arrangement of the endless objects of experience man is led by some internal compulsion to infer that the totality of these conceptions is Unity, in his notion of which he includes all the ideas which he has previously formed.

Such is the natural result of the constitution of the mind of man, but in attempting to reason upon this Unity, which he has seized so unhesitatingly, he discovers that, proceed in which way he will and start from whatever basis he may, he reaches an impassable barrier to the progress of his argument before attaining the object of his search. He finds that by the path of experience his labour is as vain as when he pursues the course of speculative thought. Yet the conviction of the truth of his idea can never be erased; no failures and disappointments in the pursuit of proofs will lead him to abandon his conviction. Show him even that it is impossible to arrive at a proof of the existence of his Supreme Ideal and he will still cling to his conception and say to you: Prove to me that my Ideal does not exist and I will then give up my belief. This you find it equally impossible to accomplish.

Having already said that speculative reason can complete no chain of argument which shall establish beyond doubt the existence of a Supreme Being, we now proceed, in illustration of our statement, to examine the opinions of the great thinkers of both ancient and modern times on this all-important subject. Before however we trace the direction which our investigations have taken through the different periods of Greek philosophy and amongst the Romans, we shall endeavour as briefly as possible to state

the opinions which prevailed amongst the principal nations of the East, the Chaldeans, Persians, Hindoos, Egyptians and Hebrews concerning the existence of a Supreme Being.

The Chaldeans as it appears not only from the testimony of Diodorus Siculus ⁽¹⁾, but also from other ancient authorities, collected by Eusebius ⁽²⁾, believed in God, the Lord and Parent of all, by whose providence the world is governed, and employed themselves in the art of divination. True science has not however been enriched by their labours.

Our information concerning the religious and philosophical ideas of the Persians in the ages prior to Zoroaster, (who lived about the time of Darius Hystaspes ⁽³⁾, and was the founder of their religion) is very imperfect. From the united testimony of the Greeks and Arabians it is certain however that long before that time the Magi existed as a body and were the official guardians of religion and learning. The religion which they taught consisted in the worship of the sun or fire ⁽⁴⁾, but whether they worshipped the sun immediately as the Supreme Being or considered it only as a visible representation of a higher invisible power, has been disputed ⁽⁵⁾. The true solution of this difficulty probably is that the vulgar paid their devotions immediately to the sun as the visible fountain of light and heat, whilst the more enlightened, conceiving of the Deity as the soul of the world, diffused through the whole circuit of the universe, imagined the sun to be only the seat of this divine principle. The multitude were contented with a sensible object of devotion, but the Magi considered the sun and fire merely as visible symbols of the animating

⁽¹⁾ l. II. p. 69. ⁽²⁾ Pr. Evan. l. IV. c. 5. ⁽³⁾ Compare Gibbon Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire c. VIII. ⁽⁴⁾ Vossius de Theol. gent. l. II. c. 2. ⁽⁵⁾ Conf. Herod. l. I. c. 131. Xenoph. Cyr. l. I. p. 65. Strabo l. XV. Ovid. Fasti l. I. v. 383. Spanhemius ad Jul. Caes. p. 144.

principle of the universe ⁽¹⁾. Zoroaster asserts the existence of a Supreme Deity who is all-powerful and eternal ⁽²⁾. It appears probable from his doctrines that he, — adopting the principle commonly held by the ancients, that from nothing, nothing can be produced, — conceived light or those spiritual substances which partake of the nature of fire, and darkness, to be emanations from one eternal source. This source, this One Universal Being is indeed not yet recognized as the free Unity of Thought, not yet worshipped in spirit and in Truth, but it is nevertheless clothed with a form, that of Light. The persian religion is therefore no idol-worship, it does not adore individual natural objects but the Universal itself. Light admits moreover the signification of the Spiritual, it is the form of the Good and True, the substantiality of Knowledge as well as of all natural things.

The highest object of the Hindoo religion is the Deity regarded as an absolute Unity escaping the grasp of the understanding. The religion and philosophy of the Hindoos were divided into two sects, Brahmissm and Buddhism. In consequence of this we find in their sacred books the greatest diversity of opinion respecting God and the Soul, that is to say we find both realism and idealism, theism and atheism, materialism and spiritualism: they contain moreover a development of the system of absolute identity ⁽³⁾.

(4) The true systematic and scientific genius of philosophy must not be expected in these works. The sum of their doctrine is as follows: — God is Light; not such as is seen as the sun or fire, but intelligence and reason

⁽¹⁾ Diog. Laert. l. I. § 6—9. ⁽²⁾ Apud Hyde p. 299. ⁽³⁾ Cic. Quaes. Tusc. V. 27. Cic. de Div. I. 23. Q. Tusc. II. 22. Plin. H. N. l. VII. c. 2. ⁽⁴⁾ Conf. Colébrooke Transact. Royal Asiatic Society. Kennedy *ibid*.

(*λόγος*). He never produced evil but light and life and souls, of which he is the only Lord. The maker and governor of the universe pervades it, and is invested with it as with a garment; he is immortal and sees all things; the sun, moon, and stars are his eyes; he preserves, directs and provides for all. The notions which the ancient Indians seem to have had of God approach so near to the tenets of Zoroaster that it is very probable that his doctrine may have passed over and been received in India. We may consider the Indian Theology as an Universal Pantheism of imagination, not of thought. One substance pervades all things, and all individualizations are directly animated into particular powers. Everything therefore, Sun, Moon, Stars, the Ganges, the Indus, Beasts, Flowers, — everything is a God to the soul of the Hindoo. And while in this deification the Infinite loses its consistency and substantiality, intelligent conception of it is impossible. Conversely the Divine, regarded as essentially changeable is also defiled and made absurd by the base form which it assumes ⁽¹⁾.

Among the Egyptians the priests were the sole depositaries of the secrets of certain sacred books written in hieroglyphics ⁽²⁾. But it is difficult to determine with certainty, owing to the want of existing records, in what their esoteric doctrine respecting the Deity consisted. It seems evident that they considered matter to be the first principle of things, and that before the regular forms of nature arose, an eternal chaos had existed which contained the materials for all future beings in a state of darkness and confusion. This Chaos was, in the most

⁽¹⁾ Comp. G. W. F. Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of History. ⁽²⁾ Comp. Heeren Thoughts on the Policy Commerce etc. of the Ancients.

ancient times, worshipped as one of their superior divinities. Aristotle speaks of Chaos and Night as one and the same, and as the first principle from which in the ancient cosmogonies all things were derived⁽¹⁾. Besides the material principle the Egyptians admitted also an active principle or intelligent power, eternally united with the chaotic mass, by whose energy the elements were separated and bodies were formed and who continually presides over the universe and is the active cause of all effects⁽²⁾.

The Hebrews or Israelites have transmitted to us in their sacred-writings the most ancient philosophical dogmas on the creation of the world, on the providence that governs it, on the origin of sin and monotheism. According to their tenets the Creator is One; there is none like him and he alone has been, is and will be. The existence of God is nothing but his essence and truth. The essence of God cannot be comprehended by the human understanding; he can only be known by his name and attributes. The nature of God is incorporeal and spiritual; simple essence without composition or accident; intellect in perpetual action. His duration both past and future is infinite. God is not so correctly said to be in place as to be himself place, for all space is full of his glory. He is the omniscient and sovereign Lord of the universe; he foresees and ordains all things, but all evil is to be attributed to the free-will of man.

Such were the opinions of the principal nations of the East and from them we may observe that it is questionable whether they had any philosophy distinct from their religion, which, as it appears, rested on their philosophical speculations.

(1) Arist. *Metaph.* l. XII. c. 6. (2) Plutarch *Isis and Osiris*.

We shall now proceed to the Greeks amongst whom religion and philosophy pursued, each by itself, their own ends; religion by certain established principles or dogmas of faith, and philosophy by its exertions in pursuit of truth by means of reason.

The great mass of the Greeks believed in a plurality of Gods. Most of these they received from foreign lands, but these exotic myths were transformed and spiritualized by the Greeks. They are to be regarded as individualities not abstractions like Knowledge, Unity, Time, Necessity etc. They are not abstract beings to which various attributes are attached, neither are they symbols, for a symbol is only a sign or a shadow of something else. The Greek Gods express of themselves what they are. That higher thought, the knowledge of Unity as God, the One Spirit, lay beyond the grade of thought to which the Greeks had attained. The philosophers however whose opinions we shall now examine had for the most part raised themselves far above the level of popular notions.

The first epoch of Greek philosophy exhibits chiefly the opinions of the so-called Physiologists the Mathematicians and the Eleatics. Among the former Thales and Anaximenes, among the Mathematicians Anaximander and Pythagoras and among the Eleatics Xenophanes and Parmenides claim our particular attention.

Neither Thales however nor any of his successors in the first Ionic school have left any records of their doctrines. For information upon their opinions we are therefore obliged to have recourse to later philosophers amongst whom Plato and Aristotle are our best authorities. Laertius, Plutarch and other writers have also left us valuable accounts of this school.

In the opinion of Thales water (*ὑδωρ*) or humidity

was the original element (*ἀρχή*) from which all things proceeded⁽¹⁾. It has however been a subject of much debate whether Thales, besides the passive principle in nature, which he called water, admitted an intelligent and efficient cause. But this point is no longer doubtful if we believe Cicero who tells us that Thales taught that water is the first principle of all things, and that God is that mind which formed all things out of water⁽²⁾. But as in the ancient mythology the generation of the Gods was a fundamental tenet, he may have believed that the Gods were also generated from water. Aristotle's account bears only this interpretation⁽³⁾. Besides we certainly object with Hegel and Lewes⁽⁴⁾ to Cicero's attributing to Thales the conception of God as intelligence (*νοῦς*) that being the expression of more recent philosophy.

The doctrines of Anaximenes are the development of those of Thales and present a decided progress. He held air to be God because it is diffused through all nature and is perpetually active. The earth rested upon it; all things were produced from it; all things were resolved into it⁽⁵⁾. It was to him pregnant with vital energy and capable of infinite transmutations as the water of Thales. In fact the air of Anaximenes is a subtle ether, animated with a divine principle, whence it becomes the origin of all beings⁽⁶⁾.

Anaximander of Miletus a Mathematician belonging to the same school (the Ionic) chose as the basis of his argument on the subject, not analogy but an assumed philosophical principle. The primary essence he asserted to be infinite (*ἄπειρον*), comprehending all things, and the

(1) Arist. Meth. I. 3. De Coelo II. 13. De anima I. 2. 5. De mundo VI. (2) Nat. Deor. l. I. c. 10. (3) Met. I. 3. (4) Biogr. Hist. Vol. I. (5) Stab. Ecl. Phys. (6) Lactan.

divine (τὸ Θεῖον) without however more exactly defining it⁽¹⁾. According to some he attributed to this divine nature an essence altogether distinct from the elements, according to others he made it an intermediate something between water and air. He most probably made use of the term ἄπειρον infinity to denote the humid mass of Thales whence all things arose, together with the divine principle by which he supposed it to be animated. This opinion is supported by the authority of Hermias who asserts⁽²⁾ that Anaximander supposed an eternal mover or first cause of motion prior to the humid mass or τὸ ὕγρον of Thales.

Pythagoras followed closely upon Anaximander; his doctrines were but a continuation of that system of abstract and deductive philosophy of which Anaximander was the chief. Concerning the Deity he appears to have taught that God is the universal mind, diffused through all things, the cause of all animated life and of all motion; in substance similar to light, in nature like truth, the first principle of the universe, unsusceptible to pain, invisible, incorruptible, and only to be comprehended by the mind⁽³⁾.

The philosophers whose opinions we have thus far considered started from experience and, in conformity to the testimony of the senses, assumed as a substratum the multiplicity of changeable things of which they endeavoured to trace the origin and connexion with the eternal. Now however a school arose at Elea in Italy that ventured to pronounce experience a mere appearance and that endeavoured to determine the nature of things as the one sole

(¹) Diog. Laert. II. 1. (²) In Irris. Gent. 10. (³) Theoph. Antiochen. ad Antolyc. l. I. § 5. Porphy. Plut. Num. l. IV. p. 117. Lact. l. I. c. 5. Plat. Phaed. p. 139. Plut. de Plac. Philosoph. I. 37. Diog. VIII. 27. 31. Jamblich. l. XXXVI. 137. Porph. v. Pythag. § 41,

substance merely from notions of the understanding. According to this view the one immoveable *Esse* is the only true being. This idealistic p̃antheism was developed by four remarkable thinkers, Xenophanes of Calophon, Parmenides of Elea, Melissus of Samos and Zeno of Elea of whom the first two held the following ideas of the Deity.

According to Xenophanes God, as being the most perfect essence τὸ πάντων ἄριστον καὶ κατὰ τιστον is eternally One, unalterable and always consistent with himself. He is neither finite nor infinite, moveable nor immoveable, and cannot be represented under any human semblance. He is all hearing, all sight and all thought and his form is spherical ⁽¹⁾. The doctrine of Xenophanes however concerning God and nature is so imperfectly preserved and so obscurely expressed that it is not wonderful that it has been differently expressed by different writers. Some have confounded it with the modern doctrine of Spinoza who supposed all the appearances in nature to be only modifications of one material substance. Others have attempted to accomodate it to the Pythagoric and Stoic notions of the soul of the world. But none of these explanations accord with the terms in which the tenets of Xenophanes are expressed. Perhaps the truth is that he held the universe to be one in nature and substance, but distinguished in his conception between the matter of which all things consist and that latent divine force which, though not a distinct substance but an attribute, is necessarily inherent in the universe and is the cause of its perfection. This view of his doctrine seems to give consistency to the language ascribed to him and is particu-

(1) Arist. de Xenoph. c. 3. Met. I. 3. 5. Sext. Hyp. Pyrrh. I. 224 sqq. III. 228. ad Math. VII. 49 sqq. Diog. Laert. IX. 19 sqq. Stab. Ecl. II. p. 14.

larly suitable to his doctrine preserved by Sextus Empiricus that God is of the same nature with the universe *τὸν Θεὸν συμφῦναι τοῖς πᾶσι*⁽¹⁾.

The philosophers of the second epoch of Greek philosophy are Heraclitus, Democritus, Anaxagoras and Empedocles.

According to Heraclitus fire or an ethereal exhalation is the principle from which all things in nature are produced⁽²⁾. This principle consists of small indivisible parts *ψίγματα* or atoms which are simple in their nature and eternal. The primary fire has within itself eternal and necessary motion by the force of which the system of nature was produced. This eternal and necessary intrinsic motion is caused by fate; the rational principle which animates the eternal fire pervades the universe and forms, preserves and dissolves in perpetual succession the visible world. The principle or soul of the world, by its eternal necessary and rational motion is God *δημιουργὸς* the maker of all things⁽³⁾.

The first idea of the atomic system was suggested by Leucippus, it was adopted by Heraclitus, improved by Democritus and afterwards carried to all the perfection which a system so fundamentally defective would admit of, by Epicurus. These philosophers rejected all metaphysical principles, and in their explanation of the phenomena of nature, proceeded upon no other ground than of the sensible and mechanical properties of bodies. By the help of the principle of motion which they attributed to the indivisible particles of matter they made a feeble and fanciful effort to account for the production of all na-

(1) Clem. Alex. Str. l. VII. p. 701. Sext. Emp. Pyrrh. l. I. c. 33. (2) Sext. Emp. ad M. l. VII. § 126. Arist. Met. l. I. c. 3. Laert. l. IX § 5—7. (3) Laert. l. IX. § 7. 8 9. Stab. E. 23. 27.

tural bodies from physical causes, without the intervention of Deity. But whether they intended entirely to discard the notion of a divine nature from the universe is uncertain. We have seen that Heraclitus held that the principle of the world in its eternal motion is God, and although Democritus either entirely rejected the notion of Deity or allowed him no share in the creation and government of the world, yet he endeavoured to conceal his impiety by admitting the popular belief that divinities inhabited the aerial regions⁽¹⁾.

The most important improvement which Anaxagoras made upon the doctrine of his predecessors was that of separating in his system the active principle in nature from the material mass upon which it acts and thus introducing a distinct intelligent cause of all things⁽²⁾. He maintained that an infinite mind was the author of all motion and life and the cause of all things, *Νοῦς ὁ διακοσμῶν τε καὶ παντῶν αἴτιος*⁽³⁾.

From these and other testimonies it clearly appears that Anaxagoras was the first amongst the Greeks to conceive the infinite mind or Deity, which his predecessors had confounded with matter, to have a separate independent existence and to be simple pure intelligence capable of forming the eternal mass of matter according of his pleasure.

Empedocles said that the first principles of nature are of two kinds, active and passive: the active is Unity or God; the passive, matter. The active principle is a subtle ethereal fire intelligent and divine. This principle gives being to all things, animates all things and into this all

⁽¹⁾ Laert. l. I. § 7. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. I. c. 43. Sext. Emp. ad Math. l. IX. § 19. 42. ⁽²⁾ Arist. Metaph. l. I. c. 4. ⁽³⁾ Arist. de Anim. l. I. c. 2. Plut. in Pericle. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. I. c. 11.

things will, in the end, be resolved. The motion of corpuscles into which matter is divided and which excites the qualities of friendship and discord, is produced by the energy of the intellectual fire or divine mind; all motion and consequently all life and being must therefore be ascribed to God⁽¹⁾.

The unsatisfactory results of philosophical research in the foregoing epochs on questions of the highest importance to men who were unenlightened by divine revelation, produced in the third epoch the Sophists. This sect having abandoned all faith in the possibility of a solution of metaphysical questions by human understanding and reason, started consequently no new ideas on them, but taught the art of disputation and devoted themselves as we learn from Plato⁽²⁾ to politics. Socrates speaking of them as teachers says: „These Sophists teach the people only the things which the people themselves profess in assemblies: yet this they call wisdom, etc.“⁽³⁾.

In the fourth epoch philosophy again asserted her empire with Socrates. He himself left no writings but his illustrious pupils Xenophon and Plato have in some measure supplied this deficiency. His doctrine concerning God is, that the Supreme Being though invisible is clearly seen in his works, which at once demonstrate his existence and his wise and benevolent providence. This point is established with great perspicuity and force of reasoning in his conferences with Aristodemus and Euthydemus. „Reflect“ says he „that your own mind directs your body by its volitions and you must be convinced that the intelligence of the Universe disposes all things according to his

(1) Sext. ad Math. l. VIII. § 287. Arist. Met. l. I. c. 4. De Plaut. l. I. c. 1. Laert. l. VIII. § 76. Plut. Plac. Phil. l. I. c. 3, 5, 17, 30. (2) Soph. 146. (3) Plat. Rep. VI. p. 291.

pleasure. Can you imagine that your eye is capable of discerning distant objects and that the eye of God cannot at the same distance see all things, and that whilst your mind contemplates the affairs of different countries, the understanding of God cannot attend at once to all the affairs of the universe⁽¹⁾?" To this passage we must add another equally deserving of attention: „Even among all those deities who so liberally bestow on us good things, not one of them makes himself an object of our sight. And He who raised this whole universe, and still upholds the mighty frame, who perfected every part of it in beauty and in goodness, suffering none of these parts to decay through age but renewing them daily with unfading vigour, whereby they are able to execute whatever he ordains with that readiness and precision which surpass man's imagination, even He the Supreme God who performs all these wonders still holds Himself invisible and it is only in His works that we are capable of admiring Him⁽²⁾“.

A partial adoption of the Socratic method and of Socratic ideas is to be observed in the following, the fifth epoch of philosophy.

Antisthenes the head of the Cynic school, it is true, paid little respect to the Gods and religion of his country, but, as might be expected from a disciple of Socrates, he thought justly concerning the Supreme Being. In his book on Physics he observes „The Gods of the people are many but the God of nature is One⁽³⁾“.

The sixth and seventh epochs of philosophy are those of the two greatest philosophers whom Greece has produced namely Plato and Aristotle. It would occupy too much space to explain fully the philosophical tenets of these two

⁽¹⁾ Memorabilia l. I. c. 4. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. II. Plut. Plac. l. I. c. 3. ⁽²⁾ Memorabilia l. IV. c. 3. ⁽³⁾ Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. I. c. 13.

great men. We must therefore confine ourselves to a brief illustration of their doctrines respecting the existence of a Supreme Being.

Plato the pupil of Socrates supposes two eternal and independent causes of all things; one, that by which all things are made, which is God; the other, that from which all things are made, which is matter⁽¹⁾. He distinguished between God, matter and Ideas, and supposes the architect of the world to have formed the universe out of a mass of preexistent matter⁽²⁾, for the fundamental doctrine of Plato, as of all other ancient philosophers is, that from nothing, nothing can proceed⁽³⁾. The principle opposite to matter is then, in the system of Plato, God. He taught that there is an intelligent cause, which is the origin of all spiritual being, and the former of the world⁽⁴⁾. The nature of this great Being he pronounced difficult to discover, and when discovered, impossible to divulge⁽⁵⁾. The existence of God he inferred from the marks of intelligence which appear in the form and arrangement of bodies in the visible world⁽⁶⁾, and from the unity of the material system he concluded that the mind by which it was formed must be One⁽⁷⁾.

God, according to Plato is the supreme intelligence, incorporeal, without beginning end or change, and capable of being perceived only by the mind. He ascribed to him also those qualities which modern philosophers ascribe to immaterial substance and conceived him to be in his nature simple, uncircumscribed in space, the author of all regulated motion and in fact possessed of intelligence in

(1) Timaeus III. p. 28. f. (2) Laert. III. § 69. (3) Tim. III. p. 28. Arist. Phys. I. I. c. 48. Cic. Div. I. II. (4) Tim. III. p. 24. Phaed. I. p. 78. (5) Ep. VII. c. 3. p. 34. (6) De leg. c. II. p. 886. (7) Tim. III. p. 30. Polit. II. p. 174. Plut. Plac. Phil. I. I. c. 7.

the highest perfection. But whether he entirely separated all ideas of extension from his conception of the Deity is a question which we find ourselves unable to solve. It is however certain that whatever were Plato's conceptions respecting the essence of Deity, he ascribed to him power and wisdom sufficient for the formation and preservation of the world and supposed him possessed of goodness which inclined him to desire, and, as far as the refractory nature of matter would permit, to produce happiness in the worlds ⁽¹⁾. This great Being he distinguished by the appellation: „τὸ ἀγαθόν“, the Good.

The doctrine of Aristotle may be enunciated as follows: — He divides substances into three kinds, corruptible, incorruptible and immoveable. The third kind is the first Mover, itself unmoved. The existence of this kind of substance may be inferred from the local motion of the heavens: for since it is not possible that the circular motion which is peculiar to the celestial sphere should have had a beginning, not only must the sphere which is the seat of this motion be an eternal substance, but there must likewise be an eternal substance which has caused this motion from eternity and which therefore itself remains immoveable and is eternally communicating motion to other substances. That substance which is the cause of eternal motion must itself be simple, pure energy, void of matter, eternal and immutable. The act of the first Mover by which it is the first efficient cause of all motion consists in the simple energy of pure intelligence. The essence of the first Mover is different from that of corporeal substances; it is indivisible, because unity is perfect; immutable, because nothing can change itself; and eternal because motion itself is eternal. This power is an incorporeal in-

(1) Polit. II. p. 174. De leg. I. X. c. II. p. 899.

telligence, happy in the contemplation of himself, the first cause of all motion and in fact the Being of all Beings or God⁽¹⁾.

If it be enquired whether Aristotle is to be ranked among the class of Theists or of Atheists, the preceeding view of his theology will justify us in replying that his system does not exclude the idea of Deity for he speaks of the first Mover as a being distinct from the world, wholly separated in his nature from matter, of a peculiar substance, possessing intellect, desire, and the power of communicating motion; the universe is dependent upon him not as upon an animating principle but on an eternal moving power. This being he represents as superior to all other intelligent natures, and calls him God. At the same time it must be confessed that it is impossible to reconcile his notion of Deity with just conceptions of the divine nature and attributes. He indeed makes God the cause of all motion, but in supposing the universe to have existed from eternity, he divests him of the glory of creation and connects him with a world already formed by the chain of necessity for no other purpose than to make him the first spring in a vast machine.

The opinions of the Sceptics and Stoics of the eighth epoch of philosophy may be briefly summed up as follows: — The Sceptics whose head was Pyrrho say that nothing certain can be known concerning a Being of whose form, subsistence and place we are ignorant. That an efficient cause exists may be inferred with probability from the productions and dissolutions which take place in nature, for how can those changes happen without a cause? On the other side it may be urged, that if any cause be admitted, some other cause must be assigned for that cause

⁽¹⁾ Met. l. XI. c. 6, 7, 8 p. 740. De Coelo l. II. c. 3.

and so on in infinitum. Each opinion may be supported by probable arguments, whence the question must remain doubtful⁽¹⁾.

The Stoical system of Zeno and his followers teaches that the efficient cause or God is pure ether or fire inhabiting the exterior surface of the heavens, where everything which is divine is placed. This ethereal substance or divine fire comprehends all the vital principles by which individual beings are necessarily produced and contains the forms of all things which from the highest regions of the universe are diffused through every other part of nature⁽²⁾. They spoke of the Deity as corporeal considered as distinct from the incorporeal vacuum or infinite space, but as spiritual in opposition to gross and inactive matter. They taught indeed that God is underived, incorruptible and eternal; possessed of intelligence; good and perfect; the efficient cause of all the peculiar qualities or forms of things and the constant preserver and governor of the world. But if in reading these descriptions of God we hastily associate with them modern conceptions of Deity we shall be led into fundamental misapprehensions of the true doctrine of Stoicism. For according to this sect, God and matter are alike underived and eternal, and God is the former of the universe in no other sense than that he has been the necessary efficient cause by which motion and form have been impressed upon matter. What unworthy notions the Stoics entertained of God appear sufficiently from the single opinion of his finite nature, an opinion which necessarily followed from the notion that he is only

⁽¹⁾ Sext. Emp. l. III. c. 1 § 2—11, 17, 24. Adr. Phys. l. I. § 33. 49. Pyrrh. l. II. c. 13. ⁽²⁾ Laert. l. VII. § 55. Plut. de Stoic. Repugn. Senec. Ep. 89, 102. Plut. Plac. Phil. l. I. c. 7. Orig. Philosoph. c. 21. p. 143.

a part of a spherical and therefore finite universe. And although the Deity of the Stoics is the efficient and intelligent cause of all the effects which are produced in the world, yet his nature and attributes are much less perfect than many admirers of this system have represented. Residing primarily in the superior celestial region and being thence diffused as a subtle fire through a finite world, his universal presence falls far short of the attribute of immensity which belongs to the divine nature⁽¹⁾.

In the ninth and last epoch philosophy had left Greece and settled in Alexandria and Rome. In Alexandria several schools were formed and some new elements introduced into the doctrines then existent. Philosophy allied itself with faith. Great thinkers — Plotinus, Proclus, Porphyry made it illustrious.

Philo, the Jew, is the first of the Neo-Platonists at Alexandria where he was born. His philosophy founded on faith from this point of course becomes a theology. God is incomprehensible; his existence may be known, his nature can never be known. But to know that he exists is in itself the knowledge of his being One, perfect, simple, immutable and without attribute. This knowledge is implied in the simple knowledge of his existence; he cannot be otherwise if he exists at all. But to know this is not to know his perfection. We cannot penetrate with our glance the mystery of his essence: we can only believe. God being incomprehensible, inaccessible, an intermediate existence was necessary as an interpreter between God and man and this intermediate existence the Mystics called „the Word“ (*λόγος*). The Word according to Philo is God's Thought. This Thought is twofold: the *λόγος ἐνδιάθετος* as embracing all Ideas (in the Platonic sense of the term)

(1) Seneca Praef. Qu. Nat. A. Gellius l. VI. c. 11.

i. e. Thought as thought; and the *λόγος προφορικὸς* the Thought realized: Thought become the Word. We see here the union of Platonism with oriental Mysticism, and the entirely new direction given to philosophy by uniting it to religion⁽¹⁾.

According to Plotinus, the first principle, the cause of intellectual life, the source of essence and being, is simple and having no place has neither motion nor rest. It is infinite, not as being immense but because it has nothing by which it can be limited. Because that from which all things proceed can permit nothing to exist better than itself, it is the best of all beings. It is essentially good, most fair and beautiful and because it is in itself lovely and the author of all that is lovely, it is the beginning and end of beauty. No attribute is to be ascribed to this first principle in the same sense in which it is to be ascribed to other beings, but in a manner wholly inexplicable. Its nature is to be comprehended rather by profound contemplation than by any act of the understanding⁽²⁾.

These later Platonists disdaining to submit to the guidance of reason and good sense, gave up the reins to imagination and suffered themselves to be borne away through the boundless regions of metaphysics where the mind labours in vain to follow them. From the life and writings of Plotinus it clearly appears that he belonged to the class of fanatics. Porphyry relates⁽³⁾ that he (Plotinus) ascended through all the Platonic steps of divine contemplation to the actual vision of the Deity himself, and was admitted to such intercourse with him as no other

(1) Phil. de Mund. Opif. etc. Euseb. Praep. Evang. VII. 13. XI. 15. Hist. Eccles. II. 4 sqq. 7 sqq. (2) Plat. Enn. III. 1. VIII. c. 9. Enn. V. 1. II. c. 1. V. c. 10. Jambl. de Myst. S. VIII. c. 2. (3) Por. vit. Plot. c. 7 etc.

philosopher ever enjoyed. In these flights are to be perceived unequivocal proofs of a feeble or disordered mind. No wonder that his system was mystical and his writings obscure. Porphyry also relates⁽¹⁾ that he himself was in the sixty-eighth year of his age in a sacred ecstasy in which he saw the Supreme Intelligence, the God who is superior to all gods, without an image. This must have been the natural effect of a heated imagination, unless indeed it be added to the long list of fictions with which the writings of Porphyry abound.

With Proclus the Alexandrian school made a final effort and with him its defeat was entire. The theological tendency is still more visible in Proclus than in Plotinus. In the allegorical interpretation of the Orphic poems and the Chaldean oracles as divine revelations in which he believed, consisted his whole doctrine. To convey the meaning of many pages of his enthusiastic dialectics concerning God we need only observe that it was his opinion that by knowing ourselves we know the essence from whom we are derived. We must therefore study carefully to become acquainted with the divinity that is within us in order that we may comprehend the divine One of which our soul is but a ray. With Proclus the Alexandrian school expired and with him ancient philosophy ceased.

In Rome philosophy was no belief filling the minds of serious men; it took no root in the national existence; it produced no great thinkers; for the Romans did not advance any new doctrine from their own conceptions. This we see upon the most cursory inspection of the writings of two of their greatest philosophers, Cicero and Seneca. Cicero attached himself chiefly to the Academic sect. With respect to God and religion there is little rea-

(1) Vit. Plot. c. 23.

son to doubt that Cicero, whilst he suspended his judgment concerning the subtle questions which had agitated the Grecian schools, adhered to the fundamental principles of religion on the ground of probability as naturally, dictated by reason and therefore commonly embraced by mankind⁽¹⁾.

As to Seneca it is evident, from the general tenor of his writings that he adhered in the main to the Stoic system. He indeed calls God incorporeal reason, but by this term he can only mean to distinguish the divine ethereal substance from gross bodies, for according to the Stoics, whatever has a substantial existence is corporeal; nothing is incorporeal but that infinite vacuum which surrounds the universe; even mind and voice are corporeal and, in like manner, the Deity⁽²⁾.

„What is nature“ says Seneca „but God; the divine reason inherent in the whole universe and in all parts; or you may call him if you please the author of all things⁽³⁾.“ And again: „Whatever appellation may imply celestial power, and energy may be justly applied to God; his names may properly be as numerous as his offices.“

We now pass on to the opinions of the philosophers of modern times where we shall recognize many sentiments which have already been discussed, clothed in a new dress it is true, but still substantially the same.

After philosophy and literature had for centuries lain dormant in the middle ages they again revived towards the end of the thirteenth century. About two hundred and fifty years however still elapsed before philosophical speculations in their true sense were again earnestly pursued.

Francis Bacon born in London in the year 1561 ap-

(1) De Nat. Deor. l. III. (2) Laert l. V. § 147, 150. Sen. Ep. 65. Stab. Ecl. Phys. c. 14. Plut. Plac. Phil. l. I. c. 3. 6. (3) De Benef. l. IV. c. 7. Quaest. Nat. l. I. c. 45. Lactant. l. II. § 148.

peared in England as a reformer of philosophy by introducing a new method of building knowledge on experience through induction. We may in justice say that his new principles as developed in his works had even a greater influence over the fortunes of philosophy than if he had completed an entire system of his own.

At the same time that Bacon chose a new path altogether opposed to the beaten one, Campanella his contemporary made a like attempt in Italy by deducing all knowledge from nature and experience. As far as any idea of the philosophical character of Campanella can be formed from the confused mass of opinions so diffusely but obscurely expressed in his voluminous writings, we must conclude that notwithstanding the censures which have been passed upon him for impiety, he is rather to be ranked among enthusiasts than atheists. God is to him an infinite cause, who transmits, — as the first, greatest and only true Being, in whom power, wisdom and love exist as preliminary principles, — his inexhaustible ideas by means of the active causes heat and cold to the corporeal masses supported in space, the basis of the world, which has its stability in God⁽¹⁾.

Thomas Hobbes, born in 1588, a contemporary and friend of Bacon in many of whose views he concurred, thought that as all our conceptions are finite, being derived from the senses, we can have no idea of infinity, and that God is not an object of apprehension but of reverence. For no one can conceive anything otherwise than as existing in some place, of some finite magnitude and divisible into parts. The desire for investigating causes leads to the

⁽¹⁾ Camp. *Universalis Philosophiae sive Metaphysicarum rerum juxta propria dogmata partes tres*. Paris 1638 fol.

knowledge and belief of a first cause, the one eternal Deity, although the divine nature is incomprehensible⁽¹⁾.

In modern times few philosophers have a higher claim to distinction than Descartes or Cartesius, born in 1596 at La Haye in Touraine, both on account of the variety and originality of his speculations and the celebrity which he attained in the philosophical world. He says⁽²⁾ „that the mind revolving within itself its various ideas finds one of a Being supremely intelligent powerful and perfect, in which it discovers an existence not possible and contingent only, as are its ideas of other things, but necessary and eternal. Since it finds within itself this idea of a Supreme Being, which could not be a fiction of its own, it concludes with certainty that this idea must have proceeded from a really existing Deity and consequently that it represents a true and immoveable nature, which cannot possibly not exist, and which is God. Examining this innate idea of Deity we find him to be eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, the founder of all goodness and truth, the creator of all things.“ His ontological proof will be more fully examined presently.

Baruch Spinoza a Jew entered into the speculative views of the Cartesian school with all the originality of a profound and penetrating genius. He made it his principle to admit nothing to be true which he could not recognize on sufficient grounds, and endeavoured to found a system which should deduce the fundamental principles of modern life by strictly mathematical demonstrations, founded on the knowledge of God. By pursuing this method he gradually approached the theory of Descartes which affirms the existence of one absolute Being with infinite attributes of extension and thought and considers all other existences

(¹) Moral and Philosophical works. London 1750. (²) Principia Philosophiae p. 1.

as merely limitations of those attributes. Substance is not an individual being, but the substratum of all individual beings: it never has begun to be but exists *per se* and of necessity and can only be thought by itself⁽¹⁾. The Deity is the only substance and alone is not circumscribed by the existence or operations of any other being. He operates according to the eternal necessity of His own nature and His will and knowledge are inseparable. The human understanding can apprehend the nature of God⁽²⁾ in so far as every idea of a real object embraces at the same time the eternal and infinite essence of God and in so far as this essence which every idea embraces is adequate or complete. In the lively knowledge of the Deity consists our greatest happiness, since the more we know of God, the more inclined we are to live according to His will — *amor Dei non nisi ex cognitione ejus oritur*⁽³⁾. In this consists at the same time our happiness and our free will, — *Deo parere summa libertas est*.

The rationalism of Descartes gave rise to the system of Malebranche who was born at Paris in 1638. His singular metaphysical hypothesis has given celebrity to his name. He gave himself up entirely to devotion and waited in silence for a divine illumination. Whilst he was in this state of mind he happened to meet with Descartes' treatise on Man and found in it so much perspicuity, that he immediately determined to make himself master of the author's system of philosophy. Having discovered the mysterious union between the soul of man and God, he wrote his famous treatise „On the search after truth“. The doctrine of this book is raised on Cartesian principles and is in some particulars Platonic. He asserts in it that the human

⁽¹⁾ Eth. p. 1. prop. 5. ⁽²⁾ prop. 46, 47. ⁽³⁾ Tract. Theol. c. IV. p. 42.

mind perceives all things immediately in the Deity. He therefore is the only basis of all thought and being and only in and through Him have we an intuitive perception of all things which are comprehended intellectually in his essence; the divinity is the intellectual world, infinite and universal reason and the abode of spirits. In these respects he closely approached Spinozism⁽¹⁾.

The tendency in favour of empirical philosophy which had been originated in England by Bacon was strengthened by Locke and Newton. Locke contested the hypothesis of innate ideas and endeavoured to prove by an induction which was necessarily incomplete that all our representations are acquired by experience. The two ultimate sources of all our representations are (1) impressions derived through the external senses and (2) reflection or the perception of the operations of our minds. The soul in itself adds nothing to the impressions which it receives through perception; it is merely a *tabula rasa* upon which all objects are impressed externally. But though he deduces all knowledge from experience, he nevertheless proposes various inadequate proofs to support and confirm the latter and in this manner he maintains the possibility of a demonstrative knowledge of the existence of God and of the immortality of the soul and endeavours to erect a system of metaphysics upon the uncertain basis of empirical knowledge⁽²⁾.

The ideas of Sir Isaac Newton concerning God are the following: The first contrivances of those very artificial parts of animals, the various organs of sense and motion, and the instinct of brutes and insects can only be the effect of the wisdom and skill of a powerful everliving agent, who being in all places is more able by his will to

⁽¹⁾ Malebranche de la recherche de la vérité. Paris 1673.

⁽²⁾ Essay on the Human Understanding. London 1731.

move the bodies within his boundless uniform sensorium and thereby to form and reform the parts of the universe, than we are by our will to move the parts of our own bodies. And yet we are not to consider the world as the body of God or the several parts thereof as the parts of God; he is an uniform being void of organs, members or parts, and the parts of the world are his creatures, subordinate to him and subservient to his will. God has no need of organs as He is everywhere present in the things themselves. It appears from phaenomena that there is a being incorporeal, living, intelligent, omnipresent, who in infinite space, as it were in His sensory, sees the things themselves intimately and thoroughly, perceives them and comprehends them wholly by their immediate presence to Himself. It is universally allowed that God exists necessarily, and by the same necessity He exists always and everywhere. He is entirely without body and bodily form and therefore can neither be seen, heard nor touched, nor ought He to be worshipped under any corporeal representation⁽¹⁾. Against the empiricism of Locke a reaction was excited in England by Samuel Clarke and Bishop Berkeley and by the comprehensive genius of Leibnitz in Germany.

Dr. Samuel Clarke admitting the existence of a necessary connection based upon reason between natural and revealed religion, endeavoured to renew the proof of the existence of God by maintaining the necessity that an independent and unchangeable being should have existed from all eternity. He described the Deity as the subject or substratum of infinite space and time and asserted that space and time were His accidents.⁽²⁾

(1) Nat. Phil. principia Mathematica Lond. 1687. (2) Comp. Clarke's Nat. Theology under the title: A demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God. London 1705.

Bishop Berkeley, a profound and enlightened thinker animated by an honest love for humanity, and venerable on account of his personal character was moved by the evil consequences which the prevailing theory of Empiricism had produced and therefore adopted a system of absolute Idealism as the only corrective and true system. Thus he holds that man can perceive nothing but his own feelings and representations because nothing exists but Spirits, but as he is not himself the cause of his own feelings, it is certain from their multiplicity and variety as well as from their harmony and consistency, that they are communicated by a Spirit, and necessarily by a Spirit whose power and wisdom are infinite, that is, God⁽¹⁾.

Leibnitz, born at Leipsic in the year 1646, was led to the composition of his philosophical system by various causes; (1) by the acute comparison he was induced to make of the most celebrated of former systems with reference to the exigences of his own time; (2) by a capacity fruitful in ingenious hypotheses and in improvements or in the accomodation of opposite systems and (3) by his great mathematical attainments. His opinion was that there are certain necessary truths belonging to Metaphysics as well to Mathematics, the certainty of which cannot be ascertained by experience, but must be sought in the Soul. This is the corner-stone of the rationalism of Leibnitz which is especially apparent in his Theory of Knowledge, his Monadology and his Theodicée. According to him necessary truths are innate: not that we are from our birth actually conscious of them, but we are born with a capacity for them. Our representations however differ in being distinct or confused. The ultimate foundation of innate and ne-

(1) Comp. Treatise on the principles of Human Knowledge. London 1710.

cessary principles resides with the Deity as the source of all necessary and eternal truths. God is the necessarily existing essence the „*monas monadum*“ and every real essence is a fulguration from Him, modified by the limited nature of the being. The essence of God is absolute perfection; it embraces all possible realities, which are in perfect harmony with each other. He is the absolute sole and allsufficient cause of the actuality of the world and of the existence of all things. On this depends the proof of God's Being and Unity. As to the existence of God Leibnitz says: It is true of God alone that if his existence be possible, he must necessarily exist, and since nothing external can make it impossible, and the proposition involves no contradiction, the existence of God is on this ground demonstrably established. Besides this demonstration of the Being of God *a priori*, it may also be proved *a posteriori*, for contingent things exist which can have no sufficient reason for their existence unless it be in a necessary being which has the reason of its own existence within itself. We shall refer again to his proofs at a later period of our enquiry⁽¹⁾.

Among the successors of Leibnitz we must mention Thomasius and Wolf, the latter being the most renowned advocate of the system of Leibnitz and the first who gave an extensive popularity to it. The notion of Thomasius concerning God is that he is not perceived by the intellectual sense but by the inclination of the will, for creatures affect the brain, but God the heart. All creatures are in God; nothing is exterior to him. Creation is extension produced from nothing by the divine power. The highest

(1) *Comp. Tract. de arte combinatoria, cui subnexa est demonstratio existentiae Dei ad Mathematicam certitudinem exacta. Lipsiae 1666.*

felicity in man consists in tranquil delight. The fountain of this delight is the rational love of man and of God⁽¹⁾.

The deeply penetrating scepticism of Hume directed against the revelations of speculative philosophy, would in fact destroy the essential part of all knowledge. His objections were directed chiefly against the immortality of the Soul and the existence of God and His providence, endeavouring to show that the principles by which these doctrines were supported were not sufficiently unimpeachable⁽²⁾. This scepticism acquired of course the greatest notoriety, attacking as it did the foundations of religion as well as the objects of experience. Many were the attempts made to refute his doctrines but most of his antagonists contented themselves with weakly appealing to common sense as a natural instinct, which was just what Hume desired.

The celebrated natural philosopher Joseph Priestley criticized at the same time both Hume and his opponents. In opposition to Hume however he alleged a proof of the existence of God which was untenable.

In England philosophy constantly pursued the path of experience. The same tendency prevailed in France. The influence of Voltaire was extensive and pernicious. He assigned the casting-vote in philosophy to the common popular Understanding and to Wit. To him may be added J. J. Rousseau who combined with him in greatly diminishing the reverence for everything positive in religion. Condillac laboured to bring to perfection the system of Empiricism. Other writers as La Mettrie, Helvetius, La Grange founded a decided system of Atheism and the En-

(1) *Introd. in phil. rationalem etc.* Lipsiae 1601 8^{vo}. *Introd. in phil. moralem cum praxi.* Hal. 1706. (2) *Essays, Moral Political and Literary* 5 Vol. 8^{vo} Edin. 1742.

cyclopaedists emulated Voltaire and Helvetius in this work, especially Diderot and d'Alembert.

To this French philosophy as well as to the scepticism of Hume opposed themselves in part the German philosophers Reimarus, a Naturalist and Theologian from Hamburg; Ploucquet, professor at Tübingen; Lambert, born at Mühlhausen, a distinguished mental philosopher and friend of Kant; Sulzer, professor at Berlin; Moses Mendelssohn who endeavoured to combine elegance with perspicuity in his speculations on the principles of Psychology, and many other eminent men by far the most eminent of whom was the celebrated Immanuel Kant of Königsberg, who effected that which was at this time so much needed, viz: a complete reformation in philosophy.

It was the pernicious influence of the scepticism of Hume, — which was originally directed only against the conclusions of speculative philosophy and chiefly against the existence of the Deity, His providence, and the immortality of the soul, — that first induced Immanuel Kant to appear with the highly important inquiries, „What can we know? Have we, or have we not, any ideas which are absolutely true?“ Before Kant could answer this, it was necessary to answer the further question, „Have we, or have we not, any ideas independent of experience?“

After a close investigation and analysis of the operations of the mind Kant in his „Critique of practical Reason“ answered the second question affirmatively, but the first negatively. Let us see how he arrived at these conclusions. „All our knowledge“ he says „begins with experience, but does not end with it“. Experience only furnishes the materials whilst it has the character of contingency and variability. The mind also supplies an element which is an inseparable condition of all knowledge, an element

which has the character of universality; and this universality is, in fact, the principle of all certitude. The mind possesses some pure principles — some ideas which were never obtained by experience and must therefore be „a priori“. We discover in the mind three faculties: sensibility, understanding and reason. Each has its pure forms. Sensibility which is both receptive and passive has the two invariable elements space and time with which it invests all the varied objects presented to it by the senses. These elements or forms of it cannot have been given in the objects or materials; they are not deducible from experience; they are a priori or pure intuitions.

The understanding is an active faculty. It possesses spontaneity and its function is to elevate the perceptions furnished to it through sensibility to conceptions — i. e. to reduce the variety of the perceptions or sensations to unity, by means of imagination, memory, consciousness and judgment.

Now all the primary modes of the operations of the understanding whereby objective unity is imparted to the matter perceived may be reduced to one of these four: Quantity, Quality, Relation and Modality. These with the subordinates Kant denominates categories after Aristotle, as determining in and by themselves what, in general and antecedently — a priori — may be predicated of objects. In these categories are the pure forms of the understanding which it imposes on the materials furnished to it by sensibility, in the same way as sensibility imposed the forms of space and time on objects presented to it. The process by which those categories or pure notions of the understanding are combined with the pure intuitions of sensation, and thereby presented to knowledge in their possible application to the objects of sense, Kant calls schematism.

But besides sensibility and understanding we have reason, or the faculty of drawing conclusions from given premises. Reason also has pure forms or ideas which are wholly independent of experience. These are above sensibility and above understanding, viz: the three ideas of God, the soul and the world. These are the laws of its operations, the pure forms of its existence. But these ideas are simply regulative; they operate on conceptions as the understanding operates on sensations and they are not intuitive. Hence reason is powerless when employed on matters beyond the sphere of understanding; it can draw nothing but false conclusions and accordingly neither the existence of God, nor the immortality of the soul nor the freedom of the will can be demonstratively established, for the ideas are essentially subjective and cannot therefore have objective truth. We cannot transcend the sphere of the subjective.

But Kant was by no means daunted at the result of his „Critique of practical Reason“. He had proved that we have ideas independent of experience and that these ideas are true because they possess the character of universality and necessity. Thereby the veracity of consciousness was established by him, and with it, the certainty of morals. Whatever therefore is found in consciousness, independent of experience, is to be trusted without dispute. Now we find in it the ideas of God, of the world, of the Soul, of immortality, of virtue etc.; we cannot therefore withhold our belief from them. Though reason is incompetent to the task of proving the certainty of these ideas, our belief in their truth is a moral and practical belief, and consequently possesses for the believer a subjective certainty and authority. Kant therefore assigned the preeminence to practical reason, rather than to speculative in conse-

quence of its end viz. wisdom morality and the conviction of the truth of our metaphysical ideas, which are found in consciousness independent of experience. These are the chief and most important results of Kant's critical investigation.

Fichte adopted faith as the basis on which the reality of knowledge rests. He belongs to that class of idealists who consider the real as simply ideal, and assumes that our representations of a material world correspond to nothing actually existing; but that by contemplating these as objects we transmute the merely ideal into the real. The fundamental axiom of this idealism is, the priority of the ideal and the subsequence of the real. Accordingly the real only exists so far as it is necessarily conceived by us, so that the external world is purely a creation of our conceptions or in other words the real is a product of the ideal. Fichte derives not merely the form but also the matter of the conceptions of external things from the mind itself, or in his phraseology „from the Ego“. He represents the Deity as the immediate moral order of the world, an idea to which the Ego attains in consequence of feeling itself restricted in the exercise of its free agency by the conception of obligation. The Ego labours to realize this duty and consequently to recognize a moral creation in the midst of the world without, which it has itself produced: in this manner it approximates the Deity and attains to the life that proceeds from God. In this moral order of the world felicity is not to be confounded with happiness, which does not and cannot exist; a doctrine which prohibits all reference to the latter as a final end. He maintains the absolute *Esse* of the Deity as the only true reality — the only pure and selfexisting life — of whom the world and consciousness are but the images and im-

press, and treats objective nature as nothing more than a limitation of Divine life.

Schelling, whose philosophy may be regarded as the complement of that of Spinoza substituted intellectual intuition for faith and constructed his psychology on that. He placed at the head of his system the absolute or the original Ego and proposed to solve on philosophical principles the highest problem which Reason can contemplate — the nature of Absolute Being and the manner in which all finite beings are derived from it. The principle which he held in common with Fichte is this: The laws of nature must exist within us as the laws of consciousness, and vice versa the laws of consciousness are found to exist in objective nature as the laws of nature. It is to be observed however that the first of these two sciences cannot investigate to the end the inexhaustible variety of external nature nor can the second attain to a perception of the Simple and Absolute. It is impossible to explain to ourselves by the ordinary processes of the understanding, how out of Unity arises Multiplicity and out of Multiplicity — Unity (the last combining the twofold characters of Unity and Multiplicity); both become lost in the Infinite, which is common to both. There must consequently be a still higher philosophy which serves as a common link to the two others, which are equally dependent on it and which both unite in it. In this manner Schelling founded his system on the Original Identity of that which knows and that which is known, and was led to conclude the absolute identity of Subjective and Objective or the Indifference of the Differing; in which consists the essence of the Absolute, i. e. the Deity. This one absolute nature reveals itself in the eternal generation of existing things, which on their part constitute the forms of the first. Consequently each indi-

vidual Being is a revelation of Absolute Being in a determinate form. Nothing can exist which does not participate in the Divine Being. The natural world, therefore, is not dead, but animated and divine, no less than the ideal. In his treatise on free will Schelling went on to make a distinction between the Deity as existing, or revealing himself; proceeding from a principle of existence contained in the Deity (Nature in the Godhead) and thus attaining the condition of a complete *Esse* and assuming the character of personality (*Deus implicitus explicitus*). All history and all the mutations of the world are consequently but the modifications of his *Esse*, and the Godhead is contained in the idea of Absolute Identity. Thus Schellings system becomes a system of Pantheism by identifying the Deity with nature⁽¹⁾, supposing him to render passive a certain portion of his own nature, with which before he energized, and to enable us to conceive of him as a personal Being, obliging us to suppose the existence in him of Nature as a negative essence for God is represented not only as a Divine Being but as Life. Now Life presupposes a certain destiny and implies passive affections and a gradual developement; to such limitations we are taught to believe that the Deity has voluntarily submitted himself⁽²⁾.

Hegel (born at Stuttgard 1770) rejected the intellectual Intuition of the philosophy of Nature and studied to make philosophy an intelligible Science and knowledge by means of Dialectics. He called Philosophy the Science of Reason because it is the idea and consciousness of all *Esse* in its necessary developement. His absolute idealism has considerable affinity with Schelling's doctrine of Iden-

⁽¹⁾ Schelling has endeavoured to repel this charge *Philos. & Relig.* p. 52. *Schriften* p. 402, 599. ⁽²⁾ *Dissertation on Liberty* p. 423.

tity, but it shows a complete departure from it in the method. With Hegel Logic usurps the place of what had been previously styled Metaphysics and Critique of Pure Reason. According to his view the essential in man is Thought, but thought is not a general abstraction, opposed to the particular abstraction; on the contrary it embraces the particular within itself.

The method of Hegel is sometimes described as an attempt to rethink the great thought of Creation⁽¹⁾; the philosopher being supposed to place himself at the point at which the Divine mind developed itself into finite existences, and to repeat that developement in the process of his own system. Creation in the Hegelian view does not imply a creator nor thought a thinker. Instead of commencing with God as the beginning of all existence, this philosophy begins with zero. The notion whose developement constitutes the process alike of existence and of thought is pure being which is identical with pure nothing⁽²⁾.

The union of being and nothing constitutes becoming⁽³⁾, and from becoming proceeds all determinate existence. The Hegelian process may thus be described as a creation of the Deity no less than of the world, for it recognizes the existence of no Deity distinct from the world. But the philosopher though aspiring to construct the universe, is virtually compelled to assume a prior universe as his foundation. Though he will not postulate a mover, he is compelled to postulate motion. The pure being which is also pure nothing has a power of selfdevelopement⁽⁴⁾. How this process takes place; or how pure non - entity can

(1) Hegel's works vol. VII. Editor's Preface. (2) Encyclop. sect. 8 cf. Logic b. 1. c. 1. (3) Encyclop. sect. 58, Logic b. 1. c. 1. (4) Criticism of Trendelenburg Logical invest. vol. I. c. 2.

contain a principle of selfdevelopment; or how, if being and nothing are absolutely one and the same, they can at the same time be two elements united; or how the union of the identical with the identical can form a compound distinct from its factor or factors — these points Hegel has omitted to explain.

But we shall not attempt to dive deeper into the absolute idealism of Hegel, nor would the limits of our dissertation allow us to unfold the speculations of the various recent schools of Germany England Scotland and France in which indeed we should find idealists and materialists holding opinions of all shades and forms, but not one who has been able to solve by absolute proof the great question of the existence of God; so that we are thrown back upon Kant's doctrine, that the ideas of reason as pure speculative ideas, though they are subjectively true, are nothing more than simple conceptions for which no corresponding object can be scientifically shown to exist and that accordingly neither the existence of God nor the immortality of the soul can be demonstratively established.

After this brief survey of the line which the investigation of our subject has taken through the various periods of ancient and modern philosophy we must now examine the various proofs which have been adduced in support of the existence of a Supreme Being.

As it is truly assumed that something has always existed, there are three hypotheses formed regarding this eternal something in its relation to the universe:

- I. That it is an intelligent Being distinct from the universe and by whom the universe has been framed;

- II. That it is the universe itself; the matter of which has always existed, developing itself in various forms and passing through innumerable changes, but never having in any proper sense begun to be;
- III. That it is an intelligent substance not existing as a personality or distinct from the universe, but identical with it, developing itself in it, becoming conscious of itself in intelligent beings and comprising in itself the sum of all existence.

The first of these hypotheses is that of Theism, the second that of Atheism, the third is that of Pantheism. Of these one must be true and only one can be true.

The methods of the proof of the truth of Theism which Theology adopts are four, — the historical, the physical, the anthropological and the teleological.

I. The Historical Argument. Here the appeal is made to facts of experience, such as the common consent of all nations to the belief that God is; the fact that God has appeared and revealed Himself to men and the fact of miracles proving the existence of the power by which they are wrought. The first of these facts presented itself to many of the ancient Theists as carrying with it urgent evidence of the existence of God, and some modern writers have conceded to it the same distinction. It may be doubted however whether there is much force in this argument. Doubtless the fact that all nations have concurred in this belief, affords strong presumptive proof that evidence in support of it is to be found somewhere, but that is a different thing from presenting such evidence itself, and beyond this it does not appear that this fact has any probatory force in relation to the present subject. Something further may however be said in favour of Theophanies. It may be admitted that whatever makes itself

objectively manifest must have a real existence, and that if God has really manifested Himself to the senses of His creatures, there is in that an evidence of His existence which cannot be rejected. At the same time as no instance is on record of a Theophany where a previous belief in the existence of God did not exist, and as in such a case there is room for suspecting that what was assumed to be a Theophany may have been a subjective deception, the reality of an asserted case of this kind will be admitted only where the belief in a God is already held on other grounds. As to the proof from miracles it is plainly a *petitio principii*, for as the design of a miracle is to prove that God is with the person by whom it is wrought, the divine existence must be previously assumed before the supposition of a miracle can be made (¹).

II. The Physical Argument. Here the reasoning infers from the fact of existence an author of this fact. Presented in its simplest form it merely postulates the necessity of a cause for existence and from that argues the existence of a great first cause of all. Whatever exists must have a cause: the universe exists, therefore it has a cause, which, as the cause of the universe, is prior to all other causes. But in this simple form the argument is untenable; it proves too much, for by the same reasoning, as God exists, He must be held to be the product of a cause and therefore not to be God. In place of the purely

(¹) See for instance (a) Cic. de Nat. Deor. I. 17. II 4. Tusc. Quaes. I. 13. Seneca Epist. 117. Maximus Tyrius dissertatio I. Clemens Alexandrinus Stromat. book V. § 134 p. 735. Ridgeley Body of Divinity Vol. I. p. 15. Payne's Lectures on Christian Theol. vol. I. p. 26. (b) Storr Biblical Theol. transla. by Schmucker p. 87 of the London reprint, where other advocates of this view are mentioned. Bretschneider Handbuch der Dogmatik vol. I. p. 282. 2nd Edit.

physical argument therefore recourse has been had to a modification of it which is known by the name of

The Cosmological Argument. This is presented in two forms. (1) The former of these is thus stated by Howe „It is evident that some being was uncaused or was ever of itself without any cause, since nothing could be its own cause. And somewhat, as appears from what has been said, (viz. that as something is, something must always have been) never was from another. Or it may be plainly argued thus: That either some being was uncaused or all being was caused. But if all being were caused then some one at least was the cause of itself which has been already shown impossible. Therefore the expression concerning the first being, that it was of itself, is only to be taken negatively that is, that it was not of another, not positively, as if it did sometime make itself. Or, what is there signified by that form of speech is only to be taken thus, — that it was a being of that nature as that it was impossible it should ever not have been; not that it did ever of itself step out of notbeing into being (1).

(2) For a statement of the latter form of the cosmological argument we may have recourse to its ablest expositor Leibnitz. „God is the first cause of all things; for those things which have their definite limitations, as ex. gr. everything which we see and experience, are contingent and have nothing in themselves which makes their existence necessary. It is obvious that time space and matter, which mutually united and in and by themselves indifferent and conformable may assume totally different movements and forms and in a totally different order. Hence we must seek the ground of the existence of the world which is nothing else than the sum of all contingent

(1) Living Temple. Part. I. Chap. II. § 10.

things, and this must be sought in the substance which has the ground of its existence in itself and which consequently is necessary and eternal" (1).

This argument has also been urged by Wolf Bilfinger and others and was by Kant regarded at one time as the only valid proof of the existence of God an opinion which he afterwards altered. The substance of it is to be found in Aristotle (2).

The objections which have been urged against this cosmological argument are: (1) That we cannot be quite sure that the world is a contingent existence, for it does not follow from the contingency of individual phaenomena that the universe as such is contingent, (2) That we can never safely conclude from the necessary relation of concepts in our own minds to the actual existence of what these speculatively necessitate and (3) That even supposing the argument valid, it could only prove the existence of something said to be a first cause and a necessary substance; it cannot show either that the something is an intelligent being or that it is distinct from the universe (3).

III. The Anthropological Argument. The reasoning here is founded on certain observed facts or phaenomena of human consciousness. As these are different the argument itself assumes different forms: (1) The Ontological Proof. The fact relied upon in this argument is the existence in the mind of a clear and distinct idea of God as the „ens perfectissimum“ the absolutely perfect being; from this it is argued that there must be an objective reality corresponding to the idea so existing in the

(1) Theodicée Opp. ed. Duteus. Tom. I. (2) Phys. Ausc. l. VIII. c. 5. Johan of Damascus exposit. fidei Orthodoxae l. I. c. 3. Diodorus of Tarens in Photii Biblioth. p. 219. Th. Aquinas summa Theologiae p. I. 2 art. 3. (3) Kant Kritik der Reinen Vernunft. Riga 1787 p. 631.

mind inasmuch as existence is as inseparable from the idea of the absolutely perfect as is the idea of a valley from that of an elevation. This argument is usually cited as that of Cartesius by whom it is propounded in several parts of his writings⁽¹⁾. In more recent times it counts among its exponents such men as Malebranche⁽²⁾, Mendelssohn⁽³⁾ and Hegel⁽⁴⁾. To these may be added the still greater name of Leibnitz, for though he says the argument is not absolutely complete inasmuch as it postulates the possibility of the divine existence which may be questioned, he virtually gives up his objection by saying that „one has the right to presume the possibility of every existence and, above all, that of God, until the contrary be proved; whence „he adds“ this metaphysical argument affords a morally demonstrative conclusion which conducts to this, that in the present state of our knowledge we must judge that God exists, and act accordingly“⁽⁵⁾.

This argument has often been treated with ridicule as if it asserted that we have only to think a thing clearly in order to prove its objective existence. Such is the view usually given of Descartes' argument but most erroneously and in the face of repeated assertions and expositions to the contrary both by Descartes and Anselm as

(¹) See *Princ. Phil.* p. 1. c. 14. *Meditationes de prima Philos. Med.* V. p. 38 edit. 1658 Amsteld. *Responsiones ad quintas objectiones* p. 89 seq. But this argument was still more ably propounded by Anselm of Canterbury long before his time in his *Prologium de Dei existentia*, his *Monologium de Divinitatis existentia*, his *Monologium de Divinitatis essentia* and in his *Liber Apologeticus contra Ganhilonem* etc. tracts which will be found in the Benedictine edition of his works 3 Vol. folio Paris 1721 and in a translated form in the *American Bibliotheca Sacra* Vol. VIII. p. 534. (²) *Recherche de la vérité* book IV. chap. 11 § 2. (³) *Morgenstunde* p. 306 2nd edit. (⁴) *Encyclopaedia der Phil. Wissenschaften*, quoted by Hagenbach, *History of Doctrines* I. 446. (⁵) *Nouve ux essais sur l'entendement humain* book VI. ch. 10 § 8 p. 404 of Raspe's edition.

well as by Malebranche, nor is it likely that such reasoners as Leibnitz and Hegel would have been caught for a moment by it, had it consisted of so transparent a paralogism as this. As it appears in the writings of its original expounders it resolves itself into the following syllogism: — We must attribute to a thing that which we clearly conceive to be included in the idea of it; but existence enters necessarily into our idea of God, so that we cannot think of God but as existing; therefore we must attribute existence to God i. e. God exists. The subtle argument thus presented is formally correct and can be invalidated only by calling in question the material accuracy of one of its premises. Now of these the former is unimpeachable; to deny it would be to deny one of the most certain laws of thought. But the latter is not so unassailable; it involves a fallacy we apprehend in assuming existence to be a quality or attribute of objects, whereas it is merely a judgment of the mind as to the relation in which objects stand to it. The existence of the sun for instance, is not an attribute of the sun, it does not enter into the idea of the sun *ex necessitate* it is simply the expression of a certain relation under which the mind cognizes that luminary. It is an error then to say that existence presents itself to the mind as included in the mere idea of the All-perfect Being; the very fact that this is proposed for proof shows that we can think God as non-existent without contradiction.

In the writings of Anselm this argument is presented in a form which is less easily assailable. He puts it thus: — We have a conception of a Being, than whom there is none more perfect — the All-perfect One. But a Being, than whom there is none more perfect, cannot exist in the intelligence only, He must also exist in reality. For let

us suppose that He exists only in the intelligence, then something greater than He can be thought viz: this Being as existent which is greater than the same Being non-existent; so that the very Being, than whom a greater or more perfect cannot be thought, is a Being, than whom a greater and more perfect can be thought, which is an absurdity. There exists therefore both in the intelligence and in reality a Being, than whom a more perfect cannot be thought, and this Being is God. To this piece of scholastic subtlety one knows not what to answer unless one denies that the concept of a Being as existing is necessarily the concept of a more perfect Being than is the concept of that same Being as non-existent, or by denying that we have in our minds the idea of an All-perfect Being, a Being than whom a more perfect cannot be conceived⁽¹⁾.

(2) The Psychological Proof. This name has been given to an argument which deduces the divine existence from the mere fact that an idea of a supremely perfect Being may be and is formed by us. It differs from the ontological argument in this, that it takes no cognizance of the contents of the concept as involving necessary existence; it simply posits the fact that such a concept exists and concludes that it can be referred for its source only to an objective reality answering to it⁽²⁾. In this reasoning there lurks a fallacy inasmuch as the existence of God is assumed to account for an alleged fact, which fact is adduced as a proof of the existence of God. Descartes indeed, virtually admits this by saying that „God in creating us has imprinted this idea upon us that it might be like a mark of the artificer stamped upon his work“. Of course before we can hypothesate Creation and

(¹) See Leibnitz *Nouv. Ess.* 1. IV. c. 10 § 8. (²) See Descartes' *Princ. Philos.* p. I c. 18. *Meditationes de prima Phil. Med.* III.

impressions by the Creator, we must presume the existence of the Creator.

(3) The proof from the operations of Conscience. Man not only judges of his own actions as right or wrong, but he pronounces on himself a sentence of approval or the opposite, according to the judgment at which he arrives. But such a judgment necessarily implies a law or standard by which rectitude is estimated and rendered obligatory, and this no less implies a lawgiver and sovereign by whom the law has been enacted and who will enforce its declarations⁽¹⁾. Fichte in a sense supports this argument⁽²⁾ though it is rather a moral order of the universe than a moral governor for which he contends. It may be seriously doubted whether the argument be valid in itself for more than this. The moral order of the universe is reason sufficient why I ought to do this and not that; if we go beyond this and introduce the idea of obligation, we already assume the divine existence, for how is it possible to have the idea of moral obligation unless we have first the idea and belief of God?

(4) The moral proof. By this name is commonly known an argument urged by Kant and by him pronounced to be the only valid argument for the existence of God. It may be thus stated: We seek by necessity of our nature the highest good; for the attainment of our object perfect happiness is essential i. e. the state of a

⁽¹⁾ See the striking passage in Cicero in his treatise *De Republica* III. 23. long preserved only as a fragment of Lactantius but now found in its proper place in the recovered treatise. See also Lactantius himself. *Div. Inst.* VI. 8. and among modern writers Chalmers' *Works* I. p. 305. Tulloch. *Burnet Prize Essay* p 268. Buchanan *Faith in God and modern Atheism compared* I. p. 101. Storr and Flatt's *Theologie Eng. Tr.* p. 81 etc. ⁽²⁾ *Die Bestimmung der Menschen* p. 260.

being to whom everything is and happens, as he wishes. Now this state can only exist, when all nature coincides with his purposes and ends. Such coincidence however we do not experience; as active beings we are not the causes of nature, and in the moral law there lies not the least basis of union between morality and happiness. Nevertheless as we must seek the highest good, this union must be at least possible. Thus the necessary connection of both momenta is postulated, i. e. the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from nature, which contains the basis of this connection. There must be a Being who is the common cause of the natural and the moral world; and this must be a Being who knows our feelings, an Intelligence and one that according to this intelligence apportions happiness to us⁽¹⁾.

To this moral argument it has been objected, that at the best it is of merely subjective force, and cannot avail to evince the objective reality of the Being whom it supposes. Further it argues the existence of a divine Being from the fact that man feels himself obliged to obey conflicting laws. This certainly indicates disorder somewhere but may not the fault lie with man himself, so that a return by him into a state of harmony with the order of the universe will bring all right? or may it not be merely some temporary disarrangement of the moral universe which will pass away and all will resume its order of its own accord?

Besides as Fichte remarks, why make the highest good to consist in the felicity of individuals — in the satisfying of the wishes of imperfect creatures such as we

⁽¹⁾ Kr. der R. V. p. 847 ed. 1787. Kr. der P. V. p. 238 ed. 1797 Kr. der Urtheilskraft.

are — rather than in the restoration of perfect moral order to the universe in the final victory of good over evil?

IV. The Teleological Argument, or the proof from design. The appeal is here to final causes, or the ends for which things manifestly exist, hence the name from *τέλος*, finis, end. This proof is also sometimes called the Physico-Theological, because it implies a theological conclusion from physical premises. It admits of unbounded illustration, but in itself is capable of being very briefly stated. When we see two or more objects fitted to each other so as thereby to secure a definite end or result we are compelled to assume the agency of an intelligent mind by which the end was contemplated, by which the fitness of the given adaptations to secure that end was foreseen, and by which the objects themselves were adopted to each other, so as to accomplish that which was thus designed. We must also assume the agency of a power sufficient to effect the contemplated arrangement. This is an assumption which we make irresistibly; we cannot consider the facts without making it. Now the universe, subject to our scrutiny is full of such instances. Whereever our senses carry us, whenever our instruments unfold to us those things which our unaided senses cannot discern, whenever consciousness opens to us the phaenomena of our inner being, in every department of knowledge we find instances of adaptation, traces of design. The inference is irresistible. There must have presided over the formation of this vast and wellordered scheme, some high intelligence by which it was conceived and plenned and a mighty power by which the whole was carried into effect.

This argument from design, as it is the most direct and convincing is also one of the oldest of the arguments for the existence of God. Though not formally stated in

the Bible it is frequently in substance adduced there⁽¹⁾. It was a favourite argument with Socrates as we have seen⁽²⁾, and by many of the Fathers it has been formally urged⁽³⁾.

This argument has sometimes suffered injury from being adduced as valid for more than it is really competent to prove. It shows that some Being exists possessed of intelligence and power and, it may be presumed, also of benevolence, by whom the world has been made; but whether this Being be himself uncreated, and whether his power and resources be infinite, and whether he be wholly beneficent, this argument by itself can do but little to determine. Kant, who is generally spoken of as rejecting the physico-theological argument entirely, admits it to be valid for all that we claim for it. „This proof“ says he „can at most therefore demonstrate the existence of an architect of the world whose efforts are limited by the capabilities of the material with which he works, but not of a creator of the world, to whom all things are subject. Thus this argument is utterly insufficient for the task before us — a demonstration of the existence of an all-sufficient Being“⁽⁴⁾.

Hume has offered one of his acute-looking but really

(¹) Comp. Job. XXVIII, XLI. Ps. VIII. XIX. CVL. CXI. Isaiah XL. 22. Acts. XVII. 23 seq. Romans I. 20. (²) Comp. Xen. Mem. I. 4, IV. 3. Also Plat. de Leg. X. 63, XII. 229. Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. 2. 33 seq. Tusc. Quaest. I. 28. 29. (³) Of modern writers who have illustrated this theme it may suffice to mention the following: — Paley Nat. Theol. The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God as manifested in Creation, by Chalmers, Kidd, Whewell, Bell, Roget, Buckland, Kirby and Prout. Chalmers' Nat. Theol. Works vol. I. u. II. M'Culloch Proofs and Illus. of the Attributes of God from the Facts and Laws of the Physical Universe etc. Thompson, Christian Theism. Buchanan, Faith in God and modern Atheism. Warden's Systematic Theol. vol. I. (⁴) Kr. der Rein. Vern. p. 654.

sophistical objections to this argument from design. He says that though in reference to the works of man, the indications of design afford valid proof of a designing intelligence it is not so when we extend the proof from the universe to God; the world is a singular phaenomenon of the making of which we have no experience. We infer from the contrivances in a watch, that it had an intelligent maker, because we have seen such things made; but we never saw a world made, and hence from the mere beholding of its phaenomena, we cannot infer that it had a maker. The fallacy here lies in the assumption that it is by virtue of experience that we infer the existence of an intelligent designer from witnessing the evidences of design in any piece of work.

In addition to the remarks we have now made on the various proofs of the existence of a Deity adopted by the most celebrated modern philosophers, we will in conclusion briefly state our own opinion and arguments on the question.

The result of our investigations has been to convince us that philosophy has not been able to secure a general and permanent conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being by absolute proof. The cause of this inability we ascribe with Kant to the incompetency of reason to establish demonstratively a fact which transcends the conceptions of the understanding. But we also assert with that deep thinker, that notwithstanding this incompetency of reason, such a fact is yet true, if the idea of it is found in our consciousness. Now as we find the idea of God in our consciousness we are compelled to believe in it or we must maintain that our consciousness with our belief in God is an idle thought, a phantom of the imagination,

a whim, than which assertion nothing could be more revolting to reason.

But how then are we to be assured that man possesses the idea of God which we attribute to him? May not (as there have been and are disbelievers in the existence of God) our idea of Him exclusively rest on a belief in the dogmas of revealed religion, or on the dictates of reason? In attempting to reply to this question it will be our object carefully to abstain from any arguments which depend in the remotest degree upon revealed religion for their validity, as to mention these would be to depart from the course to which this dissertation professes to confine itself. But as to the dictates of reason we have shown that reason is powerless to generate in us the idea of the existence of a Supreme Being; so that, as we are still compelled to believe in it, and men have always believed in it, the idea of God must be *a priori* in our minds as an intuition totally independent of experience. It must have a basis in itself which receives its life from an intuitive knowledge of the Divine Being. And so it is. Whence else our idea of Him? Whence our belief in immortality if not from this innate knowledge of Him, this faint impression of Himself left upon us by our Creator? Of what then is this impression? Our intuition answers unhesitatingly — of a Being „eternal“ immortal and invisible who formed us for a more developed existence than can be attained in this world, who joined for a time our immortal essence and our mortal bodies together, so that a finite and imperfect body should carry about with it as part of its individuality an infinite essence such as we conceive our soul to be.

But then arises the question: — How can there be Atheists if the idea of God is *a priori* in the minds of all men?

Our answer is this: The a priori idea of God is not manifest to all men alike. From some it is concealed altogether, others have but a dim or confused notion of it. The reason of this mental discrepancy appears to be this: The a priori idea of God in man is sometimes concealed altogether because it is covered by many aftergrowths; it may be indistinct because it is modified partly by the extent of the cosmological conception i. e. by the ideas which each individual forms of the world of sense from that part of it which comes under his immediate observation, partly by the degree to which he raises his moral cultivation and follows his moral sense, and partly by the light which his reason is able to throw on it. It may therefore be difficult to discover that deep-seated principle even in ourselves, but strip away its many coverings, extend your conceptions of the universe, raise the degree of your moral cultivation, increase your power of reason and in every case the a priori idea of God will manifest itself.

The appearance therefore of Atheists, or such of our fellow men as, while they were in prosperity, did not understand nor heed the principles of their own minds, because then their only thought was self, does not deny our assertion, for place these beings in circumstances of sudden trial and danger and then they are constrained to confess their dependance on a mightier Being, than themselves. And what is it that fills the last moments of an impious man with horror and dismay? Is it the dread of parting with life, is it regret at leaving this world or is it the fear of annihilation? Look, for instance, at a man whose existence has been wretched, who has nothing to regret in this world; ask him whence is his fear, and will he give any of the answers we have suggested? Not any. He will tell you that he knows now it is too late, that there exists

a Supreme Being to whom he owes but has not rendered obedience; he will tell you that he believes his soul to be immortal and that his dread arises from fear of meeting in the unseen world that Being whose existence and power he feels bound to acknowledge and one of whose attributes is justice. These are not fears of the imagination; they are the deep-grounded terrors of the reason. The fear itself is an undefined reality, arising from the basis of faith in the idea of God in him, of which we have spoken; the form it will assume may be of the imagination. It is after this principle has been uncovered that man seeks for revelation to aid him in developing it; this is the faith that in reasoning beings prepares the way for revelation.

We have thus endeavoured to show that though reason is powerless to prove the existence of God, we are nevertheless compelled to believe in it, because the idea of God is a priori in our minds; that this idea may be concealed in some and dim and confused in others and that an extensive conception of the world which surrounds us, high moral cultivation and conduct and correct arguments of reason quicken our understanding of it and our faith in it.

But above all it is reason which — by concluding from the phaenomena of our inner being, from the fitness of all objects in the whole universe to each other for definite ends and results, that there must be a Being with infinite attributes of Wisdom, Goodness and Power, by whom all was contemplated, designed and accomplished, and by whose everruling Providence all is guided, it is reason, we say, which thus awakens, fosters, developes and confirms our belief in that peculiar principle which we have called the a priori idea of God in man. The moral proof of Kant is, we conceive, based upon it; his magnificent conception of the categoric imperative loses its

vitality without it. The basis of morality must rest in the belief that we possess an a priori knowledge of the Divine Being, however imperfect that knowledge may be. Without the aid of revelation however it is impossible to attain to accurate knowledge of God and His attributes; our consolation, if we feel ourselves unable to demonstrate His existence satisfactorily, must be that we know that our conviction of His existence can never be eradicated, that His non-existence can never be established.

Thus we perceive that philosophical research as exercised upon transcendental subjects can be of little further service than to convince us of our need of superhuman illumination, and if it should only succeed as far as this it will have conferred an inestimable benefit upon us; we shall rise from our meditations with the conviction of having attained the limits of unaided research, and shall be prepared to accept with thankfulness the plan of enlightenment which has been presented to us.



